

*Lear.* Deny to speake with me?  
They are sicke, they are weary,  
They haue trauail'd all the night? meere fetches,  
The images of reuolt and flying off,  
Fetch me a better answer.

*Glo.* My deere Lord,  
You know the fiery quality of the Duke,  
How vnremoueable and fixt he is  
In his owne course.

*Lear.* Vengeance, Plague, Death, Confusion:  
Fiery? What quality? Why *Gloster, Gloster,*  
I'd speake with the Duke of *Cornwall*, and his wife.

*Glo.* Well my good Lord, I haue inform'd them so.

*Lear.* Inform'd them? Do'st thou vnderstand me man.

*Glo.* I my good Lord.

*Lear.* The King would speake with *Cornwall*,  
The deere Father  
Would wish his Daughter speake, commands, tends, ser-  
Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood: (uice,  
Fiery? The fiery Duke, tell the hot Duke that  
No, but not yet, may be he is not well,  
Infirmitie doth still neglect all office,  
Whereto our health is bound, we are not our selues,  
When Nature being oppress'd, commands the mind  
To suffer with the body; Ile forbear,  
And am fallen out with my more headier will,  
To take the indispos'd and sickly fit,  
For the found man. Death on my state: wherefore  
Should he sit heere? This act periwades me,  
That this remotion of the Duke and her  
Is practise only. Giue me my Seruant forth;  
Goe tell the Duke, and's wife, I'd speake with them:  
Now, presently: bid them come forth and heare me,  
Or at their Chamber doore Ile beate the Drum,  
Till it erie sleepe to death.

*Glo.* I would haue all well betwixt you. *Exit.*  
*Lear.* Oh me my heart! My rising heart! But downe.  
*Foole.* Cry to it Nunckle, as the Cockney did to the  
Eeles, when she put 'em i'th' Paine aliuie, she knapt 'em  
o'th' coxcombs with a stick, and cryed downe wantons,  
downe; 'twas her Brother, that in pure kindnesse to his  
Horse buttered his Hay.

*Enter Cornwall, Regan, Gloster, Seruants.*

*Lear.* Good morrow to you both.

*Corn.* Haile to your Grace. *Kent here set at liberty.*

*Reg.* I am glad to see your Highnesse.

*Lear.* *Regan*, I thinke you are. I know what reason  
I haue to thinke so, if thou should'st not be glad,  
I would diuorce me from thy Mother Tombe,  
Sepulchring an Adulteresse. O are you free?

Some other time for that. Beloued *Regan*,  
Thy Sisters naught: oh *Regan*, she hath tied  
Sharpe-tooth'd vnkindnesse, like a vulture heere,  
I can scarce speake to thee, thou'lt not belecue  
With how deprauid a quality. Oh *Regan*.

*Reg.* I pray you Sir, take patience, I haue hope  
You lesse know how to value her desert,  
Then she to scant her dutie.

*Lear.* Say? How is that?

*Reg.* I cannot thinke my Sister in the least  
Would faile her Obligation. If Sir perchance  
She haue restrained the Riots of your Followres,  
'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,  
As cleares her from all blame.

*Lear.* My curses on her.

*Reg.* O Sir, you are old,  
Nature in you stands on the very Verge  
Of this confine: you should be rul'd, and led  
By some discretion, that discernes your state  
Better then you your selfe: therefore I pray you,  
That to our Sister, you do make returne,  
Say you haue wrong'd her.

*Lear.* Aske her forgiveness?

Do you but marke how this becomes the house?

Deere daughter, I confesse that I am old;

Age is vnneccessary: on my knees I begge,

That you'l vouchsafe me Rayment, Bed, and Food.

*Reg.* Good Sir, no more: these are vnfighly trickes:

Returne you to my Sister.

*Lear.* Neuer *Regan*:

She hath abated me of halfe my Traine;

Look'd blacke vpon me, strooke me with her Tongue

Most Serpent-like, vpon the very Heart.

All the stor'd Vengeances of Heauen, fall

On her ingratefull top: strike her yong bones

You taking Ayres, with Laineenesse.

*Corn.* Fye sir, fye.

*Le.* You nimble Lightnings, dart your blinding flames

Into her scornfull eyes: Infect her Beauty,

You Fen-suck'd Foggies, drawne by the powerfull Sunne,

To fall, and blister.

*Reg.* O the blest Gods!

So will you wish on me, when the rath moode is on.

*Lear.* No *Regan*, thou shalt neuer haue my curse:

Thy tender-hefted Nature shall not giue

Thee o're to harshnesse: Her eyes are fierce, but thine

Do comfort, and not burne. 'Tis not in thee

To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my Traine,

To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,

And in conclusion, to oppose the bolt

Against my coming in. Thou better know'st

The Offices of Nature, bond of Childhood,

Effects of Curtesie, dues of Gratitude:

Thy halfe o'th' Kingdome hast thou not forgot,

Wherein I thee endow'd.

*Reg.* Good Sir, to th' purpose. *Tucket within.*

*Lear.* Who put my man i'th' Stockes?

*Enter Steward.*

*Corn.* What Trumpet's that?

*Reg.* I know't, my Sisters: this approues her Letter,

That she would soone be heere. Is your Lady come?

*Lear.* This is a Slave, whose easie borrowed pride

Dwels in the sickly grace of her he followes.

Out Varlet, from my sight.

*Corn.* What meanes your Grace?

*Enter Gonerill.*

*Lear.* Who stockt my Seruant? *Regan*, I haue good hope

Thou did'st not know on't.

Who comes here? O Heuens!

If you do loue old men; if your sweet sway

Allow Obedience; if you your selues are old,

Make it your cause: Send downe, and take my part.

Art not asham'd to looke vpon this Beard?

O *Regan*, will you take her by the hand?

*Gon.* Why not by th' hand Sir? How haue I offended?

All's not offence that indiscretion findes,

And dorage termes so.

*Lear.* O sides, you are too tough!

Will you yet hold?

How came my man i'th' Stockes?

*Corn.* I set him there, Sir: but his owne Disorders

Deser'd

Deser'd much lesse aduancement.

*Lear.* You? Did you?

*Reg.* I pray you Father being weake, seeme so;

It will the expiration of your Moneth

You will returne and sojourn with my Sister,

Dismissing halfe your traine, come then to me,

I am now from home, and out of that prouision

Which shall be needfull for your entertainment.

*Lear.* Returne to her? and fifty men dismiss'd?

No, rather I abjure all roofes, and chuse

To wage against the enmity oth' ayre,

To be a Comrade with the Wolfe, and Owle,

Necessities sharpe pinch. Returne with her?

Why the hot-blooded *France*, that dowerlesse tooke

Our yongest borne, I could as well be brought

To knee his Throne, and Squire-like pension beg,

To keepe base life a foote; returne with her?

Perfwade me rather to be slauie and sump'ter

To this detested groom.

*Gon.* At your choice Sir.

*Lear.* I prythee Daughter do not make me mad,

I will not trouble thee my Child; farewell:

Wee'l no more meete, no more see one another.

But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my Daughter,

Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,

Which I must needs call mine. Thou art a Byle,

A plague sore, or imboyled Carbuncle

In my corrupted blood. But Ile not chide thee,

Let shame come when it will, I do not call it,

I do not bid the Thunder-bearer shoote,

Nor tell tales of thee to high-udging Ioue.

Mend when thou can'st, be better at thy leisure,

I can be patient, I can stay with *Regan*,

I and my hundred Knights.

*Reg.* Not altogether so,

I look'd not for you yet, nor am prouided

For your fit welcome, giue care Sir to my Sister,

For those that mingle reason with your passion,

Must be content to thinke you old, and so,

But she knowes what she doe's.

*Lear.* Is this well spoken?

*Reg.* I dare anouch it Sir, what fifty Followers?

Is it not well? What should you need of more?

Yea, or so many? Sith that both charge and danger,

Speake gainst so great a number? How in one house

Should many people, vnder two commands

Hold amity? 'Tis hard, almost impossible.

*Gon.* Why might not you my Lord, receiue attendance

From those that she calls Seruants, or from mine?

*Reg.* Why not my Lord?

If then they chanc'd to slacke ye,

We could comptroll them; if you will come to me,

(For now I spee a danger) I entreate you

To bring but fife and twentie, to no more

Will I giue place or notice.

*Lear.* I gaue you all.

*Reg.* And in good time you gaue it.

*Lear.* Made you my Guardians, my Depositories,

But kept a reformation to be followed

With such a number? What, must I come to you

With fife and twentie? *Regan*, said you so?

*Reg.* And speak't againe my Lord, no more with me.

*Lea.* Those wicked Creatures yet do look wel fauor'd

When others are more wicked, not being the worst

Stands in some ranke of praise, Ile go with thee,

Thy fiftie yet doth double fife and twentie,

And thou art twice her Loue.

*Gon.* Heare me my Lord;

What need you fife and twenty? Ten? Or fife?

To follow in a house, where twice so many

Haue a command to tend you?

*Reg.* What need one?

*Lear.* O reason not the need: our basest Beggers

Are in the poorest thing superfluous,

Allow not Nature, more then Nature needs:

Mans life is cheape as Beastes. Thou art a Lady;

If only go warme were gorgeous,

Why Nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,

Which scarcely keeps thee warme, but for true need:

You Heauens, giue me that patience, patience I need,

You see me heere (you Gods) a poore old man,

As full of griefe as age, wretched in both,

If it be you that stirres these Daughters hearts

Against their Father, foole me not so much,

To beare it tamely: touch me with Noble anger,

And let not womens weapons, water drops,

Staine my mans cheekes. No you vnnatural Hags,

I will haue such reuenges on you both,

That all the world shall—I will do such things,

What they are yet, I know not, but they shall be

The terrors of the earth: you thinke Ile weepe,

No, Ile not weepe, I haue full cause of weeping.

*Storme and Tempest.*

But this heart shal break into a hundred thousand flaws

Or ere Ile weepe; O Foole, I shall go mad. *Exit.*

*Corn.* Let vs withdraw, 'twill be a Storme.

*Reg.* This house is little, the old man an'ds people,

Cannot be well bestow'd.

*Gon.* 'Tis his owne blame hath put himselfe fr om rest,

And must needs taste his folly.

*Reg.* For his particular, Ile receiue him gladly,

But not one follower.

*Gon.* So am I purpos'd.

Where is my Lord of *Gloster*?

*Enter Gloster.*

*Corn.* Followed the old man forth, he is return'd.

*Glo.* The King is in high rage.

*Corn.* Whether is he going?

*Glo.* He calls to Horse, but will I know not whether.

*Corn.* 'Tis best to giue him way, he leads himselfe.

*Gon.* My Lord, entreate him by no meanes to stay.

*Glo.* Alacke the night comes on, and the high windes

Do forely ruffle, for many Miles about

There's scarce a Bush.

*Reg.* O Sir, to wilfull men,

The iniuries that they themselues procure,

Must be their Schoole-Masters: shut vp your doores,

He is attended with a desperate traine,

And what they may incense him too, being apt,

To haue his eare abus'd, wisdom bids feare.

*Corn.* Shut vp your doore: my Lord, 'tis a wil'd night,

My *Regan* counsels well: come out oth' storme. *Exit.*

### Actus Tertius. Scena Prima.

*Storme still. Enter Kent, and a Gentleman, severally.*

*Kent.* Who's there besides foule weather?

*Gon.* One minded like the weather, most vnquietly.

*112 Kent.*